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HOW TO JUDGE VALUE in Wool Fabrics

An Independent Survey

prepared by

THE HOUSEHOLD SCIENCE INSTITUTE

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A BASIC SHOPPERS' GUIDE TO VALUE IN WOOL FABRICS

The Household Science Institute, an independent, non-profit research organization, has compiled this authentic information from recognized authorities. The facts have been interpreted and the material condensed to provide you with an impartial guide to the essential quality factors to look for in judging value in Wool Fabrics.

IN CHOOSING WOOL FABRICS, REMEMBER—

1. The quality of a wool fabric depends upon the kind and grade of wool used. The best grades cost more.
2. Good quality wool is resilient and elastic, but with varying degrees of softness depending on the kind of wool.
3. Good wool excels in wrinkle resisting qualities.
4. Fine, soft wool fabrics are attractive and cost more but often do not wear as well as slightly stiffer fabrics made of coarser fibers or yarns with more twist.
5. Hard board-like fabrics do not hold their shape well in garments, as they are usually made of poor quality fibers which lack elasticity and springiness.
6. Loose weaves are less durable than firm closely woven fabrics — catch and snag easier.

SEVEN THINGS TO REMEMBER ABOUT WOOL

Adapted from material supplied by Associated Wool Industries.

1. Wool is by nature a body covering.
2. Wool is a regulator of body temperature — protects from heat and cold.
3. Wool is absorbent and porous.
4. Wool is elastic and resilient.
5. Wool is strong and durable.
6. Wool is light and soft.
7. Wool is smart and economical.

FABRICS

Worsted fabrics are made of strong highly twisted yarns. The preparation and twisting of wool worsted yarns require the use of fairly long fibers, which accounts for much of the strength of worsteds and their lack of fuzzy surface.

Woolen fabrics are made of softly twisted yarns. Woolens are softer and fuzzier than worsteds, but may not be so strong. As shorter fibers can be used in woolens, they can be less expensive than worsteds.

LABELS, GRADES, ETC.

Labels 100% WOOL, ALL WOOL, PURE WOOL, and the like, indicate that the fiber content is entirely wool, but are no indication of the quality. All wool may or may not be good wool. **Part wool** fabrics while cheaper than all wool lose much of its qualities including warmth, and wrinkle more easily.

Wool and cotton mixtures shrink less than all wool. May be good choice for garments that require frequent laundering. Silk and rayon in mixtures give luster and novelty effects.

Substitutes for wool: Spun rayon may be woven to look like a sheer wool fabric, but lacks the warmth and resiliency of wool.

Grades of wool: Wool may be the fiber from the fleece of the sheep or lamb, angora goat, camel, llama, cashmere goat, or vicuna. Fibers range from fine to coarse and from less than 1 inch to several inches in length. Fabrics made of very short fibers do not wear well. **Virgin wool** is simply **new** wool regardless of its quality.

SELECTING WOOL FABRICS

1. Points that indicate durable fabrics:
   a. Firmly woven fabric of tightly twisted yarns.
   b. Have warp and filling of nearly equal strength.
   c. Unravel a yarn. Long fibers help make strong fabric.
   d. Napped fabrics wear off quickly at points where rubbing occurs. If nap comes out when pulled gently, it will wear off very quickly.

   e. Worsteds usually wear longer and shrink less than woolens but become shiny from wear and pressing.

2. Tests for wool:

   a. Burn yarns from warp and filling. Wool unlike cotton will burn slowly and smell like burning hair.

   b. Boil sample gently for 10 min. in solution of 1 tablespoon household lye in 1 pint of water. **Do not use aluminum vessel.** Wool and silk will dissolve; fibers that remain will be cotton or rayon.

3. Quality: After squeezing in hand, good quality wool will spring back to shape and show little tendency to wrinkle. Poor quality will lack resiliency and feel stiff; will not be as warm as the softer, better grades.

SHRINKAGE

Wool fabrics are seldom completely pre-shrunk. Wool fabrics will shrink even after sponging and laundering many times. If the directions for "Care and Cleaning" are followed carefully, little shrinkage will result. Special chemical treatment may be given which will reduce the tendency to shrink — a few such fabrics are available, mostly intended for making infants' wear.

Sponging of fabrics before cutting will lessen the effects of cleaning and wetting in showers. Most dealers have a sponging service, available when you purchase wool yard goods, for which the charge is small.

CARE AND CLEANING OF WOOL FABRICS

Wool fabrics tend to shrink readily. Water and heat soften the outer layer of the fibers which will then felt or mat together if rubbed while in that condition. Dry cleaning preserves "new look" and prevents shrinkage better than washing.

Wool scorches easily. Always press with a cloth and a moderately hot iron.

To prevent a shiny appearance along seams or thick places, stop pressing before the garment is quite dry.

Laundering:

Use a mild soap. Wool is damaged and yellowed by strong soaps and water softeners. Dissolve soap before putting garment in water so as to prevent the formation of soap curds in the fibers if the water is hard.

Suds and rinse waters should be about 100° F., which will feel neither hot nor cold to the wrist. Shrinkage will result if the water temperatures are too high or if the fabric is submitted to considerable temperature change at any time while wet.

Squeeze suds through fabric, do not rub. While wet, friction causes shrinkage and felting.

Dry in shady place. Sunlight causes white wool to become yellow, and causes colors to fade. Stretch back to original shape while damp.

Satisfaction from wool fabrics depends upon choosing the fabric best suited to the need.

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